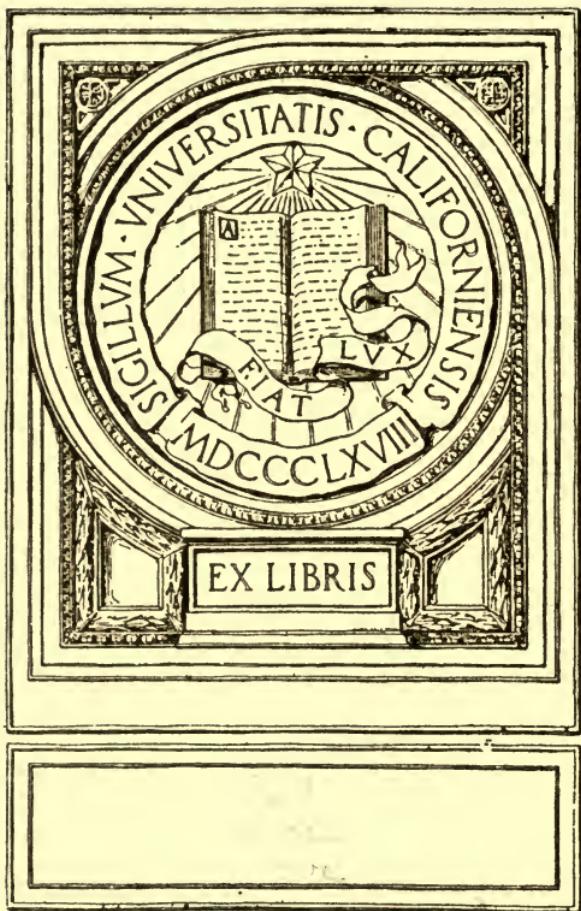


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# **THE CRY OF YOUTH**

*By Harry Kemp*  
JUDAS, A PLAY

# THE CRY OF YOUTH

By  
HARRY KEMP

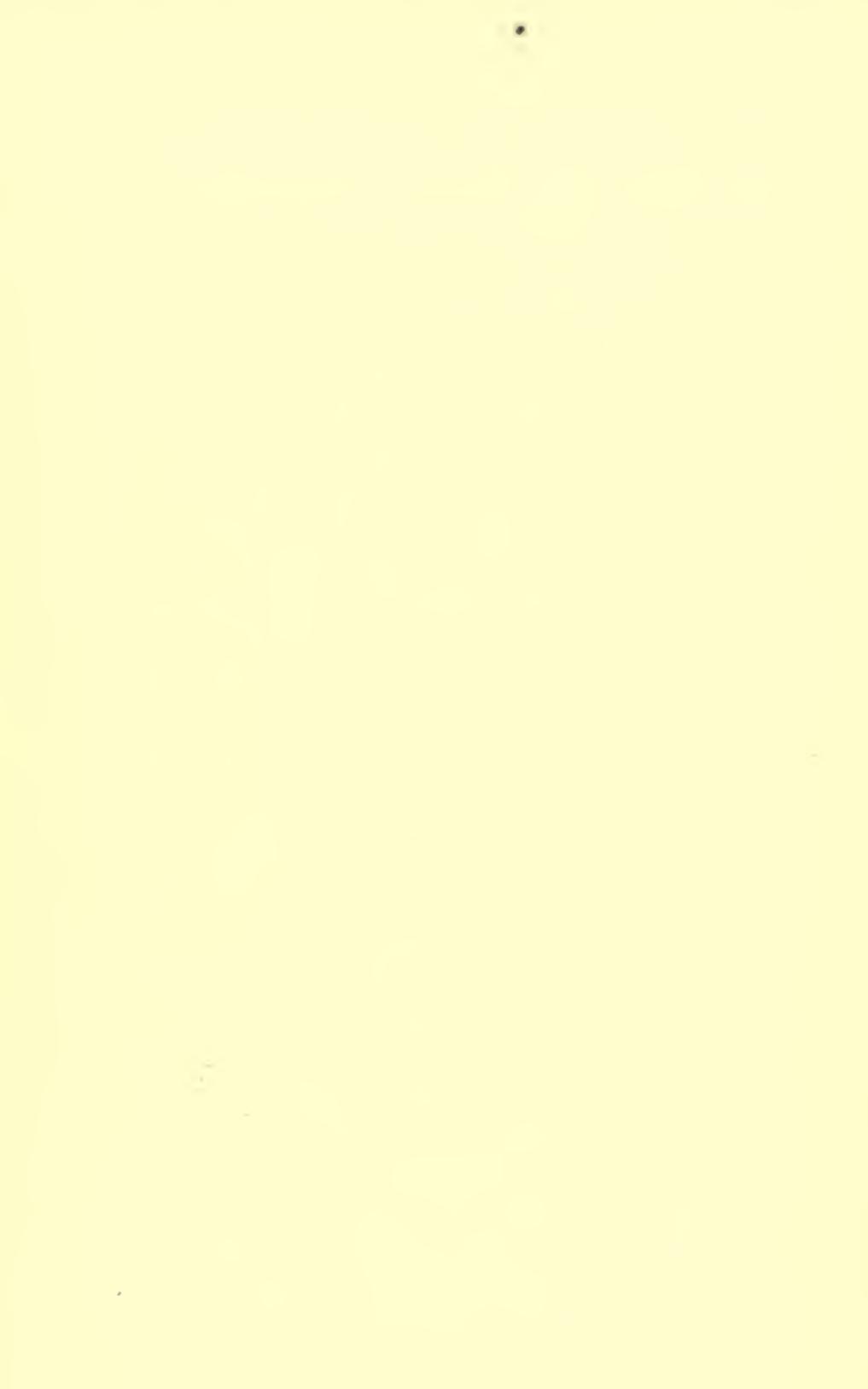


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*To*  
*Gaylord Wilshire*

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## POEMS BY HARRY KEMP

### JOSEPH'S LAMENT

MY boy, my boy, and art thou dead?  
Would they had stretched these limbs  
instead  
Upon this bitter leafless tree!  
But thou wouldst pay small heed to me!  
Yet hadst thou given me heed, my boy,  
Thou'dst known a workman's quiet joy:  
To sit in the declining sun  
At peace when the day's stint is done—  
A wife had sat at thy right hand:  
A cot, a little space of land  
With one gray olive tree before,  
And a seat by a vine-clad door  
Had blessed thee, happy at thy trade,  
And a small son had climbed and played  
With broken prattle on thy knee—  
But, son, thy soul was deaf to me . . .  
And so thou hang'st where all may see . . .  
O shameful death! O shameless tree!  
My murdered boy! . . . Woe, woe is me!

## CARRYING THE BANNER

[Which is tramp-argot for walking the street  
all night]

I HAD no bed to go to and I had to walk the  
street.

I passed a lone policeman going up and down  
his beat.

A solitary cab whirled by and made a hollow  
sound.

I stamped my feet to keep them warm and  
tramped around and 'round.

A strangling icy fog dropped down and draped  
the town in white

As one would shroud a maiden perished ere  
her wedding night.

I moved as in a land of ghosts. The wind went  
thro' my hair

Like the fingers of a demon searching for some  
stigma there.

The moon hung watery and thin. The stars  
had faded out.

Amid a labyrinth of night I groped and groped  
about.

I moved along the water-front. I felt so small  
and lone

As I heard the great ships at the docks strain  
at their ropes and groan.

I footed it thro' Chatham Square and up along  
Broadway.

I prayed the Lord to take the night and give  
me back the day,

The warm kind day, the cheery day that kissed  
one's eyes with light,

For it seemed to me the world at last had found  
its endless night . . .

But suffice to say I saw the East stir and grow  
pale apace

As a coward loses color when he looks in Mur-  
der's face,

And then the City stirred and stretched and  
drew a quickened breath

And struggled out of nightmare sleep like Laz-  
arus from death. . . .

And then I walked alone no more . . . The  
streets grew thronged with men—

And I said 'Thank God' with all my heart, for  
it was day again!

## NICODEMUS

There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews; the same came to Jesus by night.—John 3:1-2.

And there came also Nicodemus, which *at the first* came to Jesus by night.—John 19:39.

**A**ND Nicodemus came by night  
When none might hear or see—  
He came by night to shun men's sight  
And away by night slunk he.

He dared not come by light of day  
To move where sinners trod:  
He must hold apart from the common heart,  
For he was a Man of God. . . .

But the honest Christ, he walked with men  
Nor held his ways apart—  
With publicans talked, with harlots walked,  
And loved them all in his heart. . . .

Came Nicodemus to Christ by night;  
And long they reasoned, alone,  
Till the Old man saw the sham of the Law  
That turned his being to stone:

He tore the formal husks from his life;  
He was born again, though gray.  
And, erect with the youth of a Living Truth,  
He dared the world by day!

## LYNCH-LAW

THE deed he had done was a terrible one,  
And the wrath-roused countryside,  
Pale silent groups of resolute men,  
Scoured every wood and swamp and glen  
Where a desperate man might hide.

And at last they struck his straggling trail  
By the shores of a reedy lake.  
They followed with bloodhounds all night long.  
They ran him down like a snake  
And dragged him forth, when the dawn was  
red,  
From the tangled canes of a brake.

They pinioned his hands behind his back,  
With buffets his head was bowed,  
And the mob rushed roaring at his side  
Like a storm-blown thunder-cloud.

And the victim shook like grass in a brook—  
His soul was shaken with dread . . .  
For his was a deed for which men swing,  
And swing by the neck till dead.

They hurried him on in a farmer's cart  
Where the road wound rough and brown—  
And silence fell, like a hush in hell,  
Over the outraged town,

As the people thronged the paven streets  
In dreadful holiday  
To behold a mob of maddened men  
Take another man's life away.

They dragged the victim across the park;  
They threw him down in the square;  
They noosed the halter about his neck  
Muscular, swart, and bare—  
And a hundred men rushed back with the rope,  
And he shot straight up in the air.

All day IT swung from the telegraph pole  
In the eyes of the sullen town—  
As tho' the body still held the soul  
All day it swayed from the telegraph pole—  
But at even they cut it down . . .

Yes, they let it swing, the horrible thing,  
In the eyes of the sullen town,  
Till the sheriff came with tardy shame,  
At eve, and cut it down.

## THE RIDE

I STRUCK him down in sudden wrath  
Over a trivial word . . .  
I shook him twice. . . . I shook him thrice  
. . .  
He neither spake nor stirred . . .

Then forth into the night I fled  
And spurred my flying steed;  
In faith a lucky man was I,  
For none had seen the deed.

All night I rode among the hills.  
The sky arched deep and wide. . . .  
Ah! like the presence of the wind  
I felt him at my side.

At dawn I passed men on the road:  
They spake with friendly tone;  
One proffered me companionship—  
*He thought I rode alone.*

"Right gladly will I ride with you,"  
I answered; but, unseen,  
The man that I had done to death  
Slipped fearfully between.

"I swear you are a gloomy man,"  
My fleshly fellow said—  
*He knew not my companionship*  
*Was wholly with the dead. . . .*

I stayed for neither food nor rest;  
My horse with staggering pace  
Strove time on time to pause our flight  
At brook or grassy place,—

And still, when fell the second night,  
That thing of shadowy fear  
Kept riding near me like the wind  
And whispered in my ear . . .

Aha! I saw him . . . now! . . . at last! . . .  
With murder still engrossed  
I struck . . . He parted like a mist. . . .  
I could not slay his ghost.

I mantled up my face in dread  
And let my horse run on;

HE too had seen, nor needed now  
The whip to urge him on . . .

Ere day we fell, my horse and I,  
Where cactus sprawled in sand—  
“Let’s play at cards,” the shadow said;  
I rose at his command;

I dealt the cards at his command,  
(My steed lay dead thereby),  
“And if YOU win, you live!” he said,  
“And if I win you die!”

We played: “I win! I win!” he cried . . .  
The dawn rose, vast and still . . .  
Behold, the sheriff and his men  
Come riding o’er the hill!

## JOSES, BROTHER OF JESUS

JOSES, the brother of Jesus, plodded from day to day,  
With never a vision within him to glorify his clay;  
Joses, the brother of Jesus, was one with the heavy clod,  
But Christ was the soul of rapture, and soared, like a lark, with God.  
Joses, the brother of Jesus, was only a worker in wood,  
And he never could see the glory that Jesus, his brother, could.  
“Why stays he not in the workshop?” he often used to complain,  
“Sawing the Lebanon cedar, imparting to woods their stain?  
Why must he go thus roaming, forsaking my father’s trade,  
While hammers are busily sounding, and there is gain to be made?”

Thus ran the mind of Joses, apt with plummet  
and rule,  
And deeming whoever surpassed him either a  
knave or a fool,—  
For he never walked with the prophets in God's  
great garden of bliss—  
And of all the mistakes of the ages, the saddest,  
methinks, was this:  
To have such a brother as Jesus, to speak with  
him day by day,  
But never to catch the vision which glorified  
his clay.

**BATHSHEBA**

KING DAVID, from his house-top  
    Saw One whose only dress  
Was the exceeding glory  
    Of her own loveliness,

While down the water sparkled  
    Like star-dust powdered fine,  
And lightly, brightly followed  
    Her body's shapely line;

Then, thrall unto the splendor  
    Of marble-contoured limb,  
The great King's trumpet languished,  
    His voice forsook the hymn . . .

Now Uriah's sworded hand  
    Was swift with the naked knife,  
And David feared his wrath—  
    But he lusted after his wife. . . .

But, though he felt as a thief,  
In his secret soul he laughed,  
“Ha! Ha! the strongest men  
Are flies, in the web of craft!”

And over the vineyards green,  
And beyond the mountains gray,  
Before the Ammonite town  
The Hebrew army lay:

So he sent Uriah forth  
With his own death writ, in his hand:  
“See that the Bearer die—  
’Tis David thy King’s command!”

And they gave him an hundred men  
And stationed him nighest the wall—  
And many and brave were slain,  
But Uriah the first of all. . . .

When a messenger running came  
In his heart King David laughed:  
“Ha! Ha! The wisest men  
Are flies, in the web of craft!”

## THE SCAPEGOAT

THEY bore me away from the happy flock  
    And away from the hill slopes green,  
Away from the midday shade of trees  
    And waters cool and clean.

And here, where the Mounts of Moab close  
    The East with a purple rim  
And the sky is a bowl of spilling fire,  
    Mine eyes in death wax dim.

They led me forth with austere joy  
    And the psalter's solemn sound,  
And about my newly-budded horns  
    A scarlet fillet wound;

And they say that I pay for a People's sins,  
    Who burn with thirst and die—  
But whether the tale be true or no,  
    God only knows, not I.

But, however it be, I wonder why  
They led me forth, accurst,  
Who, of all the hillside-clamb'ring flock,  
Was neither best nor worst;

And was it really the Will of God  
That brought me here to die  
Where the Salt Sea stinks, and the salt marsh  
reeks,  
And the dead reeds rustle dry?

Yes, why should they lead me, me, of all,  
To the desert sick with drought? . . .  
I have dreamed, three nights, 'neath fiery stars,  
That green grass filled my mouth,—

Where the Salt Sea stinks, and the salt marsh  
reeks,  
And the dead reeds rustle dry,  
I have dreamed, three nights, of a stream that  
sweeps  
In a sheet of silver by. . . .

O, I wonder if it be true or no  
That the good Lord *did* decree  
That the sins of a People could be cleansed  
By the death of one like me! . . .

For why should I, who have done no wrong,  
For the sins of others die  
With a scarlet fillet about my horns?—  
God only knows, not I!

## THE CONFLICT

LISTEN, listen to the blowing bugles!  
I am young . . . The voice of them is sweet.  
Arm you well, O Youth, 'tis you they're calling.  
That's the cry that never sounds retreat.

Once entangled in those plunging squadrons,  
Carried as the foam is on the wave—  
You can never cease the breaking battle  
Till you fall into an open grave.

✓

## WHY BID LOVE STAY?

WHY bid love stay beyond the day  
Or dure beyond the morrow?  
There's naught can stay with yea or nay  
This joy that touches sorrow.

But he who gives love with both hands  
May, ere he part, discover  
One who doth wend a passing friend  
Turn everlasting lover.

## BLACK DEATH

**H**E gave her neither rest nor peace  
Until his lips drew her sweet breath,—  
But while she drooped against his breast  
A Third stood at their side, Black Death.

And when the lover went his way,  
Invisible and hollow-eyed  
Into his castle followed him  
That Shape, and brought to naught his  
pride.

The castle lights shone pale and dim.  
They bore the lover on his bier—  
The peasant maiden kissed his eyes  
And the Black Angel followed her.

The Lord sent down a Form of Light  
To ask Death why he smote unbid. . . .  
Death answered the eight-winged messenger,  
His face in his black mantle hid—

"True love bound prince and peasant maid;  
Yet Rank forbade the marriage-tie . . .  
But now they can be happy both:  
The Grave knows neither Low nor High!"

## HASTEN, CLASP MAIDEN LIFE

HASTEN, clasp Maiden Life round her  
white waist,  
And drink in, loverlike, her perfumed breath,  
For in the night death waits us—we must taste  
The bony and the lipless kiss of Death!

## THE LIVE CONSCIENCE

THE dead man lay beneath the mold,  
But still his spirit knew  
The soft stir of each blade of grass  
As toward the sun it grew;

He heard the far-flung church bells ring,  
He heard the joyous sound  
Of children's voices, as they played  
Above, on April ground;—  
And he felt the little, red-tipped worm  
Go nosing round and round.

He felt the winter rain drip down;  
It ached against his bones—  
And his was not a plight where one  
Might ease oneself with groans,

For he had to lie forever dumb  
There in the dreadful tomb

Till all the graves gaped open wide  
At the crashing Trump of Doom,

Till interminable time had flown  
And the universe grew gray,  
Ere the finger of Eternity  
Would touch his eyes with day.

He could not move, he could not weep,  
Nor might one finger strive  
To lift itself; he could not sleep,  
For his conscience kept alive;

His dreadful conscience kept alive,  
(Oblivion held no term)  
And it preyed upon his spirit worse  
Than midnight or the worm:

O, if this be what men call "death,"  
I do not wish to die  
Till the sun goes out like an unfilled lamp,  
And God folds up the sky!

## THE PAGAN SAINT

FROM this rock-girdled hight  
These twenty barren years  
Have I beheld the sun  
Drop like a golden bird  
Adown the smould'ring West,  
Have I beheld the stars  
In their blue paths o'erhead  
Resume their solemn march  
Thro' concaves vast of sky—  
Have watched the glowing East,  
A hollow shell of fire,  
Suffuse with gradual pearl  
And burst to flower of day:—  
And, dawn on radiant dawn,  
And, eve on roseal eve,  
The melody of birds  
Has mounted up to me  
From coverts close of green;  
And fragrances of flowers,  
And scents of field and wood,  
Have oft assailed my sense

With mem'ries of that Time  
When Pagan ways I walked,  
Before the White-souled Christ  
Redeemed me from the World. . . .  
And, pity me, O God!—  
Last night, just ere the stars  
Faded to ghosts of light  
At the first touch of Dawn,  
Methought Apollo stood  
Bright with eternal youth,  
And golden, as of yore,  
Midmost a cloven cloud  
Of oblique-billowing fleece—  
“Awake! Awake!” he cried,  
“Lo! where Olympus looms  
Athwart the azure space  
Of heaven, as of old!  
Still Jove’s ambrosial locks  
Shake thunder thro’ the world  
And my immortal hand  
Plucks music from the lyre;  
And hamadryads, still,  
And dryads of the wood,  
And fountain-dwelling nymphs  
Inhabit grove and flood—  
But Blindness and a Night  
Have fallen upon men!” . . .

Ah, pity me, Lord God,  
At those crag-echoed words  
My penance seemed a shame  
Thrust on me 'gainst my will,  
And, for purpureal robes,  
And rose-crowned bowls of wine,  
And all of Youth's glad things  
That I for Thee flung by,  
My Soul yearned, hungering! . . .  
Ah, and it seemed that all  
That I had deemed a Rock  
Dropt from beneath my feet,  
And, like a crumbling mist  
Of fading pearl and gold,  
Thy Heaven fell to naught,  
And I was left with Naught! . . .

Have mercy on my Soul,  
For I am weak, O God,  
Thou Triune God in One! . . .  
When fled that evil dream  
And, wakening, I beheld  
These twilit crags about,  
I, meager-fleshed and wan,  
I fain had ta'en my staff  
With purpose to descend  
And leave this desolate life

(Desolate but for Thee)—  
To knock with palsied hand  
At the shut Door of Youth,  
And beg a Miracle:  
That I might enter in  
And live Life's Bloom again. . . .  
But now my rose is dust  
And, ah, it may not be! . . .

## PEACE, PEACE

PEACE, peace, broken heart, peace!  
All these grievous things must cease,  
They will drop off one by one  
Like ripe fruit in a quiet sun.  
Thine enemies shall be no more,  
Thy mockers will forget their lore,  
The flowers from the mead will die  
And God's great hands will break the sky.  
Nothing that's evil but will cease  
Under His whisper of Peace, Peace.  
All shall drop off one by one  
Like ripe fruit in a quiet sun . . .  
Yea, e'en thy cruel Love will lie  
A dead thing beneath a dead sky.

## THE PAINTED LADY

I AM sick of lust," the Painted Lady said,  
    "Of the perfumed sheets of a barren bed,  
Of the passion I feign tho' I feel it not,  
Of the outward bloom and the inward rot."  
The Harlot laughed a hungry laugh—  
"Never the joys of a mother I quaff,  
For my love is a thing that is not of love,  
And bitter the wine as the lees thereof.  
Though the touch of my lips be heavenly sweet,  
Hell's dragons coil about my feet,  
And the seventy curses of hell I give,  
For I've got to live, I've got to live!  
I am the cowboy's passing bride,  
Am mistress of him who masters the tide,  
Am the dear delight of the workman's life  
Whose wages can never support a wife.  
I slake men's ravening desire  
As I burn thro' mankind as a fire—  
Yet I stand in God's eyes censure-free  
For the selfsame flame consumeth me.  
I am the obverse face of love

With marriage the other side thereof,  
And I and the Bride together join  
In the sexual mold of a single coin,  
For the full-leaved bulk of the marriage-tree  
Roots in the dung and mulch of me. . . .  
And, maidens who boast the purest white,  
'Tis I who save you from Lust's despite,  
'Tis I preserve you without a flaw  
Till you go and lie with a man by law . . .  
But I'm sick of LIFE," the Painted Lady said,  
"And I would to God that I were dead!"

## THE CONTRAST

WITH ripples of blinding fire all Broadway  
wavered ashine,  
And taxicabs streamed by like great black  
beetles in line,  
When into my being she stepped,—she, like a  
goddess, aglow  
In an exquisite clinging gown,—I, in my rags  
and woe!  
Was she the mate of the thing brutish, bloated  
and old?—  
I opened the taxi for them and into the night  
they rolled.  
She touched my heart like a flower and made  
the world grow sweet:  
He tossed me a silver coin . . . I let it lie in  
the street . . .

## QUICK AND DEAD

FROM the trouble and strife of life set free,  
He lay in the grave. "Thank God,"  
thought he.

Just then two lovers murmured o'erhead . . .  
"Would that I were alive!" he said.

## LOVE IN OLD MEXICO

I DREAMED of ships sailing across the sun  
Cargoed with allspice and with cinnamon,  
Of trogons flaming forth from tropic groves,  
Of moist airs breathing sandalwood and cloves,  
Of black-mawed caverns gulping bristling seas,  
And winds a-whisper with strange melodies,  
Quetzals of gold and green and purple stain,  
Colossal cities strewn along the plain,  
Of haunted forests full of twilight sheen  
Where print of mortal foot hath never been,  
Where black despairs the dreamer ever woo—  
And thro' them all there gleamed the face of  
you.

SHE CAME FROM HER NARROW BED

HE came from her narrow bed:  
    "As cold as stones are my feet,  
And, Love, there is no lustihead  
    In a wormy winding-sheet."

'Twas thus she coaxed his spirit forth.  
    They mixed like clouds in a storm,  
And for the space of a passing dream  
    He fostered her chill form.

## THE SONG OF RED RILEY

I HAVE a girl in the East,  
A Girl in the West,  
And between the two, God wot,  
I know not which is best.

I have a girl in the North,  
And one in the South—  
But the sweetest lass of all,  
She bit blood from my mouth.

## PRITHEE, STRIVE NOT

PRITHEE, strive not to remember  
    Ancient love burnt out and dead;  
Blow not on the blackened ember,—  
    Ash will ne'er again give red.

Lift the latch—another lover  
    Waits upon thy kiss without:  
All the old things have gone over  
    That the heart went mad about.

## MY LADY'S BATH

O THE sky hung dark and shaded  
And the winds were ill at rest,  
And the slow black clouds paraded  
Heavily from east to west—

When my Lady's whim did strip her  
Pure and soft as she was born,  
Off she drew each small gold slipper  
By a bare bush harsh with thorn.

Then the sun his eyes unclouded  
With the right arm of a gale  
And a rainbow arched and prouded  
Like a peacock's spreading tail.

(See! The questing wind reposes,  
Boughs to green-leaved bourgeon stir,  
And the thorn-bush blushes roses  
At the pearl-white glimpse of her.)

## FICKLENESS

I LOVED . . . I lost . . . "The very  
world,"

Thought I, "must cease to be;  
June, find no pleasure in her rose,  
Since She no more loves me!"

But when I saw the world still glad  
With sun and flower and rain,  
That June had not forgot her rose—  
I straightway loved again.

## MY GYPSY MAID

I KNOW a gypsy maiden and she travels in  
a van:  
I think she loves me better than the shiftless  
gypsy man.  
She reads cards with the best of them, she  
pierces with her eyes.  
Her voice is low and very sweet and quick with  
love-replies.  
She has a touch of starlight and she knows the  
sun and moon.  
Her breasts are full and ample as red roses  
late in June.  
And I've told her that I love her . . . And I  
guess she understands  
(Her red lips drooped a-quiver, there was  
trembling in her hands,  
This little Gypsy maiden that travels in a van)  
That I'll make a better husband than a loafing  
Gypsy Man.

## THE DECEIT

ON the way to Istral where the sea sweeps  
in  
I met and kissed a maiden irresistible as sin;  
Her breasts were tipped like coral and her un-  
bound hair  
Hung thick across her bosom, and her face was  
fair.

I lay with her a night-space in the white moon-  
shine  
And wakened in the morning like a drunkard  
after wine . . .

I wakened in the morning with a lover's greed  
For renewal of embracement . . . and em-  
braced a weed  
And a length of blackened driftwood. . . .  
Then I rose afraid,  
For a witch, God wot, had snared me in the  
semblance of a maid!

## KANSAS

**G**IVE me the land where miles of wheat  
Ripple beneath the wind's light feet,  
Where the green armies of the corn  
Sway in the first sweet breath of morn;  
Give me the large and liberal land  
Of the open heart and the generous hand.  
Under the widespread Kansas sky  
Let me live and let me die.

## THE LITTLE BROOK OVER THE HILL

THE little brook over the hill that my childhood knew  
Where fragrant mint and slender willows grew—  
Like vanishing flashes of light the minnows swam  
In its rippled shallows. I mind me the dripping dam

Buidled of logs and stones and sod breast-high,  
Where the brimming waters stole a patch of the sky  
And we splashed 'mid clouds and parted watery trees,  
And shouted and leaped, and raced at naked ease.  
I believe in dryads and nymphs and satyrs still  
Because of the little brook at the foot of the hill.

---

How it flashed a thousand bickering gleams in  
one  
When it caught the full effulgence of the sun.  
How it teemed with life: for a thousand tribes  
dwelt there,  
Curious, delicate, purple, and argent-fair—  
The dragon fly that poised on a rippling blade  
Of grass, unnumbered creatures of sun and  
shade,  
Wee lives that throve under stones and scur-  
ried away  
When a wanton hand let in a storm of the  
day—  
Claw, and fin, and scale, and shell, and gill,  
There was life a-swarm in the little brook over  
the hill.

The little brook over the hill—I wandered  
away,  
And then, grown taller of life, came back one  
day,  
And I found they had taken my little brook  
over the hill  
To turn the roaring wheels of a smoky mill;  
Blue-bursting bubbles, circle-wise swimming,  
had slain

The teeming lives of which my heart had been  
fain—

Only belligerent crayfish here and there  
Fought on for being; and willows draggled and  
bare

Strove for the sun; the trees were shrunken  
and wrived

And all the beautiful little lives had died. . . .  
And I cursed the greedy world and the ruthless  
mill

That had swept with death the little brook over  
the hill.

## THE STAMPEDE

THE lightning tossed its tangled boughs  
And great winds ran about:  
At midnight all the cattle rose  
And took to sudden rout.

And, whirled in seething floods of rain,  
We followed in their wake,  
While ebbed and surged the driving storm  
Like waves which lift and break.

Mad was the night and mad the flight;  
We prayed beneath our breath—  
For, 'mid that sea of tossing horns,  
Beneath those hoofs, lay death.

Then in the same mysterious way  
They paused as they began . . .  
And down our backs the trickling drops  
In ceaseless rivulets ran,

As round and round the herd we rode  
For hour on hour of rain,  
Singing them songs of lusty cheer  
Lest they should rise again.

## AH, SWEET THE BIRDS

AH, sweet the birds are singing, and mead  
and shaw are green;  
The sky shines like a mirror, by winds and rain  
washed clean;  
The flocks are out to pasture, the world wends  
two by two;  
The sheety mill-pond captures high noon's re-  
motest blue,  
And even in the city I wot that sparrows sing,  
And sickly shoots of leafage take color of the  
spring—  
And universal gladness in every heart doth call  
And laughs, and knows no reason. . . . God,  
how I hate it all!

## WINTER

*The Jersey Coast*

A LONG the river's level sheet of ice  
Gray sea-gulls gather, lift, and light  
again;  
Shining and hard with solid glaze of sleet  
Lie marsh and meadow; here and there a bird,  
Deceived by three days' sunshine, pecks in vain  
For sustenance, or droops on icy bough.  
And blank with boarded window, by the shore,  
Mid dreary waste of rime-encrusted dune  
Loom hostelries whose summer guests have  
flown.

## IN A STORM

[*On the Bark "Pestallozi"*]

UPON this great ship's tilted deck  
I stand, an undiscerned speck,  
And, where the vast, wave-whitened sea  
Leaps at the moon enormously  
In green-ridged tides, the ship's expanse  
Dwindles to insignificance.  
Thro' ether, perilously hurled,  
Thunders the huge bulk of the world,  
Which, in the eyes of other spheres,  
Itself a sunlit mote appears.  
In turn, all suns and stars in sight  
Lessen to needle-pricks of light,  
Flung helpless thro' an awful void  
Where measures fail, and Time's destroyed . . .  
And still dost see when sparrows die?  
O God, where art Thou? . . . Here am I!

## INSOUCIANCE IN STORM

[*On the Ore-Boat "Howe"*]

DEEP in an ore-boat's hold  
Where great-bulked boilers loom  
And yawning mouths of fire  
Irradiate the gloom,

I saw half-naked men  
Made thralls to flame and steam,  
Whose bodies, dripping sweat,  
Shone with an oily gleam.

There, all the sullen night,  
While waves boomed overhead  
And smote the lurching ship,  
The ravenous fires they fed;

They did not think it brave:  
They even dared to joke! . . .  
I saw them light their pipes  
And puff calm rings of smoke! . . .

I saw a Passer sprawl  
Over his load of coal—  
At which a Fireman laughed  
Until it shook his soul:

*All this in a hollow shell  
Whose half-submerged form  
On Lake Superior tossed  
'Mid rushing hills of storm!*

## EVENING ON LAKE SUPERIOR

LIKE to a molten globe which workers turn,  
Of crimson-heated steel, the sinking sun  
Dropped to the far blue level of the lake  
And laid a burning causeway o'er the waves.  
Then in the russet twilight sable clouds  
Sat here and there, sprinkled with little stars—  
Thus darkness came, and, a red light to port,  
A green to starboard, at the cable's end  
Our shadowy tow-boat followed in our wake.

WEIN, WEIB——!

[*The Complaint of the Old Lakeman*]

TOO old em I to sail eny more  
    (He glanced at his wasted thews)  
But I might uv been on the Lakes to-day  
W'ere the whistles talks an' the fog hangs gray  
    If it hadunt 'a been fer booze.

If it hadunt a' been fer booze an' whores  
    (By rights this is my Prime)  
O, the road is broad—but it don't go far,  
Fer, no matter how good a man you are,  
    *They'll git you every time!*

## 'A SAILOR CHANTEY

[*On Bark "Pestallozi," off Tristan D'Acunha Islands*]

SIX hearty husky lads were we,  
Able to cope with storm and sea.  
O, the deck reeled drunken beneath our feet,  
And the sky and ocean seemed to meet.  
*Hear, landsmen meek, who thrive and wive,*  
*We climbed up, six,—and we came down, five!*  
For the grim wind thro' the ratlines roared  
And hurled our comrade overboard.  
He fell headlong to the maniac sea,  
Tumbling and grappling vacantly.  
The black horizon seemed to grin,  
And a high wave rose to welcome him in.  
The next day, when the storm was o'er,  
The sea was as smooth as a dance-hall floor  
.

For days our comrade floated about,  
And the sea-gulls pecked his blue eyes out;

For days he floated with eyeless stare,  
And the small fish nibbled his white bones  
bare,—  
Then he bubbled down thro' the surgeless deep  
To sleep where the cuttlefish sprawl and creep.

We vowed when we reached the land, why then,  
We'd never go to sea again—  
But we blew in all our cash ashore,  
And here we are to sea once more!

## BOB

BOB had a nigger woman  
That kicked and bit like a horse  
More jungle-wild than human . . .  
She knifed him in due course . . .

Bob had a nigger woman:  
She knifed him till he died . . .  
For six whole days she wouldn't eat . . .  
For seven more she cried! . . .

## THE BOXCAR

I SING the boxcar rumbling and rolling afar,  
Rocking o'er prairies, clacking thro' populous towns,  
Laboring up long grades, griding down valleys,  
Marked for repairs, groaning with merchandise,  
Side-tracked, bumped about, loaded, reloaded again,  
Dusty and serviceable, the greatest traveler of all,  
Habitat of hoboes, chalked with their marks  
and scrawls—

I sing the side-door Pullman, the changing vistas,  
The shifting panoramas of countryside,  
The waving fields, the farms, the villages.  
Away with your cushioned seats, your palace cars  
And the highfalutin names they wear on their sides!

Give me the boxcar, having no name at all,  
Only a number—and give me a true-blue pal  
To dare the ups and downs of the Road with  
me.

### A TRAMP'S CONFESSION

WE huddled in the mission  
Fer it was cold outside,  
An' listened to the preacher  
Tell of the Crucified;

Without, a sleety drizzle  
Cut deep each ragged form,—  
An' so we stood the talkin'  
Fer shelter from the storm.

They sang of God an' angels,  
An' heaven's eternal joy,  
An' things I stopped believin'  
When I was still a boy;

They spoke of good an' evil,  
An' offered savin' grace—  
An' some showed love fer mankin'  
A-shinin' in their face,

An' some their graft was workin'  
The same as me an' you:  
But most was urgin' on us  
Wot they believed was true.

We sang an' dozed an' listened,  
But only feared, us men,  
The time when, service over,  
We'd have to mooch again

An' walk the icy pavements  
An' breast the snowstorm gray  
Till the saloons was opened  
An' there was hints of day.

So, when they called out "Sinners,  
Won't you come!" I came . . .  
But in my face was pallor  
An' in my heart was shame . . .  
An' so fergive me, Jesus,  
Fer mockin' of thy name—

Fer I was cold an' hungry!  
They gave me grub an' bed  
After I kneeled there with them  
An' many prayers was said.

An' so fergive me, Jesus,  
I didn't mean no harm—  
An' outside it was zero,  
An' inside it was warm . . .

Yes, I was cold an' hungry,—  
An', O Thou Crucified,  
Thou friend of all the Lowly,  
Fergive the lie I lied!

## BREAD LINES

GOOD God! What keeps men up so late  
upon this dripping night  
When every rain-wet paving stone shines with  
its blur of light  
Caught from the white electric arc? The wind  
is blowing chill,  
No human foot would wend abroad save at  
some master's will . . .  
And these men have a master terribler than  
mortal lord,  
Whose pity might be wakened and whose mercy  
be implored;  
The lord of them is Hunger fell who whips  
them as they go,—  
With dreadful scourge of famine he insults  
them, blow on blow.  
They turn and twist in silent line and shuffle  
hopeless feet  
In solemn drear procession down the shadow-  
haunted street

---

They tramp along while other folk are safe  
and warm in bed;  
They move in line for half a night to gain  
their dole of bread,  
And hunger makes them patient of the cold,  
the sleet, the rain,—  
But every weary step they take finds echo in  
the brain,  
And the heart becomes the pavement, and it  
spirts with jets of pain.

Ye masters, why must this thing be? Is this  
the exacted price  
(This sordidness and misery and poverty and  
vice)  
For every upward step Man takes along the  
sunlit way?  
Why must these edges of the night still fringe  
the rear of day?  
The masters answer nothing: they will neither  
hear nor see;  
They play, with men as checkers, at their game  
of usury;  
They reap where they have never toiled, they  
sell the unsown grain,  
They make the worker moil for them nor heed  
his cry of pain.

Their tasks are busy idleness which sow no  
good for men,  
They spread their nets and catch their fish and  
spread their nets again—  
But shadowy bread lines throng my heart and  
whisper, stern and low,  
“Some day they’ll have to answer us, whether  
they will or no!”

## A BED

I'M glad I have a good warm bed to snuggle  
in to-night  
For the winds are in the alleys and the stars are  
cold and bright.  
I'm glad I do not have to tramp along the  
paven street,  
A-tremble with the bitter blasts which numb  
and freeze the feet.  
But I'm sorry for the others that must wander  
to and fro  
And suffer as I had to do not many months  
ago;  
I think of them, the thousands, in the bitter,  
bitter dark  
Who move alone along the street with none  
but God to mark,  
For tho' inured to many shames my heart can  
ne'er endure  
The misery and hardship of the ever-patient  
Poor.

I've dozed by dying camp-fires and waked shuddering in the night,  
Have seen the shining Zodiac depart, ere dawn,  
from sight,  
Full oft I've slept in city jails where Vice was  
gathered in  
And each man hugged the nightmare of his own  
peculiar sin;  
And I've slept in side-tracked boxcars while the  
heartless winter lay  
By my side, a cold companion, till a storm begot  
the day. . . .  
So I'm glad I have a good warm bed to snuggle  
in to-night,  
For the winds are in the alleys and the stars are  
cold and bright.

## THE OPEN WORLD

I AM swept with the storm of life,  
I shake and sway like a tree—  
For all the winds of all the world  
Sweep over me.

I toss my boughs to the clouds  
That drive high over my head.  
Right glad am I for the open sky  
Where tempests are bred.

*✓REVOLT*

A CCEPT, and the world moves with you,  
Revolt, and you walk alone,  
But sweet it is both night and day  
To know that your soul's your own—

That the open sky is above you,  
That your ways are free and bold,  
That *you're* not one of the timid sheep  
That cower in the fold.

## THE HARVEST FLY'S COMPLAINT

WHEN the sun stares hot, unsparing, like  
    a lidless golden eye,  
I labor, dusty, sweating,—whom they call the  
    harvest fly.  
The header-box runs up and down and fills  
    with slippery wheat.  
I leap about and ply the fork, all arms and  
    hands, and feet.  
I'm up before the dawn, nor rest before the  
    moon rides high—  
And they couldn't do without me, tho' they call  
    me harvest fly.

The farmers and the papers send out lying  
    calls for me:  
Where they say they need a hundred they have  
    work for two or three.  
Then I flit in, brown and mothlike, and for-  
    gather with my kind

In some little town far Westward open to each prairie wind:  
And the farmers come to hire me; but by that time park and street  
Teem with hundreds who have listened to the siren call of Wheat,—  
So they beat me down in wages, give as little as they can,  
And if I get indignant they go hire another man.

But the harvest doesn't last for long—the stubble bristles brown,  
The wheat's all cut and stacked, and then I hike on back to town,  
And try to catch a freight and leave, but find they've closed down tight  
On letting hoboes beat their way, and jug them left and right.  
They were glad enough to get me here, but, now the work is done,  
The Law must steal what I have earned beneath the broiling sun,  
The Court must have its share in fines (I tell a common tale),  
And they haul me off for vagrancy and clap me into jail.

And, Pard, I'm getting sick of it—the way they  
treat us men,  
And, sometimes, I make up my mind I won't  
go back again—  
But then I get a vision of those rolling miles  
of grain,  
Of the lines of marching trees that make a  
wind-break on the plain,  
And I'm off before I know it, peering from a  
boxcar door:  
*Though I know that I am in for being done as  
heretofore!*

## WHITE SHEETS

✓

NOW that white sheets have held me  
For many a wakeful night  
Convention's bonds have spelled me,  
And slain is my delight. . . .

But several nights by camp-fire  
And several dawns by dew  
Will make another creature,  
My shrivelled soul, of you.

## CASHING IN

I CAUGHT a glimpse of his frightened face  
as he fell between the cars,  
And I made a jump for the cinder path and I  
saw all kinds of stars.  
I rolled like a log in a cataract, then, staggering  
to my feet,  
I sat me down on a railroad tie and my nerve  
was gone complete.

The two red lights of the little caboose shrank  
into the gulping night,  
And I thanked the Dark for covering up the  
Terror from my sight.  
Dim woodlands haunted the high-banked track  
like black clouds dropped from the sky,  
And over my head a screech owl wheeled with  
a wild and dismal cry.  
'Twas a five-mile drill to the nearest town, and  
I hit a nervous gait,  
And said to the operator there, "A bum fell  
under a freight."

O, my chum cashed in like a feeble match  
quenched by a gust of wind,  
Or as a flickering fire goes out which hoboies  
leave behind.  
No more he'll stretch across the rods or ride  
the cramped brake-beam,  
A thrall to the lure of the unseen land and the  
fascination of steam,—  
For they've laid him away in a rough pine box  
on the slope of a barren hill—  
But out across the universe his spirit wanders  
still:  
He has mooched it on from star to star, and  
from sun to flaming sun,  
He has taken the planets like strings of beads  
and slipped them, one by one,  
Along the cord of memory, for he who knew  
the earth  
Must learn the universe as well on the eve of  
his second birth . . .  
And when he kneels before the Throne, his  
hunger for seeing filled,  
And the grand antiphonies of the sky to hear  
his doom are stilled—  
Prone there between the avenues of the flaming  
cherubim—  
I know that the One who pardoned the Thief  
will be merciful to him!

## THE CATTLEMAN'S BURIAL

[*S. S. Maori King, South Seas*]

WE bore our comrade from his bunk, we  
kept him overnight,  
In a fold of heavy canvas we sewed him good  
and tight—  
With stitch on stitch we sewed him in and hid  
him from the sight . . .  
We laid him on a tilted plank, and solemn-  
souled were we. . . .  
Behind us whirled the troubled wake, around  
us spread the sea—  
And then each man removed his hat and stood  
with down-sunk head  
As the dapper little captain read the service for  
the dead.

Said the Boss of all the cattlemen, "I'm glad  
it isn't me  
Wot 'as to lie so lonesome at the bottom o'  
the sea."

And I looked out across the waves which ran  
in crests of foam,  
And longed for fields, and running brooks, and  
all my friends, and home.

## AWAY FROM TOWN

HIGH-PERCHED upon a boxcar, I speed,  
I speed, to-day:  
I leave the gaunt gray city some good green  
miles away,  
A terrible dream in granite, a riot of streets  
and brick,  
A frantic nightmare of people until the soul  
grows sick—  
Such is the high gray city with the live green  
waters round  
Oozing up from the ocean, slipping in from  
the Sound.  
I'd put up down in the Bowery for nights in a  
ten-cent bed  
Where the dinky "L" trains thunder and rattle  
overhead;  
I'd traipsed the barren pavements with the pain  
of frost in my feet;  
I'd sidled to hotel kitchens and asked for some-  
thing to eat.

But when the snow went dripping and the young  
spring came as one  
Who weeps because of the winter, laughs be-  
cause of the sun,  
I thought of a limpid brooklet that bickers  
thro' reeds all day,  
And made a streak for the ferry, and rode  
across in a dray,  
And, dodging into the Erie where they bunt  
the boxcars round,  
I peeled my eye for detectives, and boarded an  
outward bound.  
For you know when a man's been cabined in  
walls for part of the year,  
He longs for a place to stretch in, he hankers  
for country cheer.

## THE CATTLE TRAIN

THEY drive the helpless cattle in  
With oaths and cries and blows . . .  
The train draws eastward while the dusk  
Is all a dying rose.

Behind, our little waycar rides,  
Twin-lighted, while ahead  
The engine fires the gulping gloom  
With burst on burst of red.

Strange is the cargo that we bear:  
We've gleaned from pen and byre  
Leg-sprawling calves and huddled sheep  
And swine that reek of mire,

Wild, frightened steers from Western plains,  
That bellow, push, and lower—  
A Stockyard leaping through the night  
At forty miles an hour.

## GOD, THE ARCHITECT

WHO thou art I know not,  
But this much I know:  
Thou hast set the Pleiades  
In a silver row;

Thou hast sent the trackless winds  
Loose upon their way;  
Thou hast reared a colored wall  
'Twixt the night and day;

Thou hast made the flowers to blow,  
And the stars to shine,  
Hid rare gems and richest ore  
In the tunneled mine—

But, chief of all thy wondrous works,  
Supreme of all thy plan,  
Thou hast put an upward reach  
In the heart of Man!

## I SAW A NAKED SOUL

I SAW a naked soul  
Crying in the dark.  
Its little outstretched hands  
Reached dumbly at my heart.  
“Who art thou?” I asked.  
“Knowest thou not?” it said,  
“Thy little unborn son!”  
And then I woke, alone,  
And hungered after her,  
Its mother yet to be  
Whom I had never seen.

## THE POLTERGEIST

A WEAK, diaphanous spirit wavered in  
Like blue columnar incense mounting  
thin—

"There is no comfort in our Way," it cried,  
"We are as naught; would God I had not died!  
For now, a bodiless thing, I wander lone,  
Divorced from vigorous thew and bracing bone.  
O, that firm flesh once more this mist might  
seal,

O, that I might the warm blood coursing feel—  
That I might call some body 'I' again,  
And, locked within five senses, walk with men,  
Potent to love, to hate, resent, forgive,  
To live the brief, sweet life I once did live,  
Not forced to borrow, in a ghost's despair,  
The Medium's strength with which to tip a  
chair,

Talk through a horn, or lift a table high!"

"Ah, Spirit, how I tremble! Say, must I  
After this life know like futility?"

## HYMN OF THE STAR-FOLK TO GOD

THERE is no need for thy mercy, for mercy  
is ours, not thine;  
Thou art as impartial as suns that burn or as  
stars that shine,  
In all infinity dwelling, with star-seas a-wash  
at thy feet  
While the tides of the systems in storm round  
the bounds of eternity beat.  
As deep as from zenith to nadir are thy ways  
and the glory thereof—  
Though we call thee Father and Love, thou  
art greater than fathers and love.  
All the gods we have fashioned to limn thee,  
all the fine-threaded logic we've spun  
Do no more measure thy glory than darkness  
measures the sun—  
While we lurk and lie in the night-time lapped  
round in the silence of sleep,  
A hint of thy power is given by Deep beyond  
star-sprinkled Deep,  
And a mote of thy infinite glory our pitiful  
selfhood stuns

When we find that the suns in our eyesight are  
a grain of sand to thy suns,

Thy millions and billions and trillions of sys-  
tems where mayhap abide

More God-seeking beings, by whom, as by us,  
thou art deified.

When our last day sickens in dusking crimson  
and crumbling gold

Our night will be as thy morning (Thou ART,  
nor canst thou wax old)

So sunset is ever as sunrise to nations which  
gaze from afar—

So sunrise and sunset are single if eyes could  
look down from a star.

Thou hast lived through a million judgments,  
seen a million systems die,

And still, like to young roses blushing, thy new  
suns redden the sky,

Thy new suns redden the sky while thine Old  
go ruinous way—

Yea, somewhere, ever, in heaven, some world  
has its judgment day,

And, somewhere, ever, in heaven, some new  
world blooms in thy sight—

And there is no end to creation, as there is no  
end to thy might.

O God beyond effort of language, O God beyond reach of the tongue!

O God who canst only be felt in the soul's sanctuary, not sung!

We know thou art better than best and wiser than wisest, we trust

Thee, and worship unto thee, who art as in wind is the dust!

We earth-peoples, star-peoples, dwelling in populous spaces of sky—

We, strangely living and loving, seek thee in spirit—and die!—

Yet we know that not for naught, since thou art thou, are we here!

With thy more-than-love above us, about us, we never need fear!

## THE STILLBORN IN HEAVEN

IN the beautiful garden of paradise, where  
the souls of the blessed go,  
I saw in dream a multitude which wended to  
and fro,  
And their mouths were filled with heavenly  
speech beyond all mortal phrase  
As they walked where the crystal fount of life  
in gleaming column plays:  
But One I saw who fared alone and bore a  
flame for his heart,  
Like a stranger in a foreign land who lives and  
moves apart;  
And yet the face of the radiant Soul was bright  
as a noonday sun,—  
And I drew a-nigh to question it, the Lonely  
and Lovely One.  
“Oh, wherefore, pray,” I asked of It, “Do you  
not join yonder throng  
Whom the healing touch of eternity has wak-  
ened into song?”

"I am neither of Heaven, nor, yet, of earth,"  
The Shining Spirit said,  
"With pangs and cries I was born last night,  
and died in my mother's bed!"

## THE SONG OF THE PYRAMID-BUILDERS

WE lived below the Elephantine  
In a papyrus-wattled village,  
And swung aloof the long shadoof  
Above our shelves of tillage.

But Pharaoh came with swords and spears,  
To sound of flute and tabor:  
For many slaves had sought their graves,  
And he was short of labor.

They marched us over leagues of sand,  
Away from wife and chattel,  
And grew we faint or made complaint  
They pricked us on like cattle.

Then, 'neath the overseer's eye,  
And to the lashes' crackle,  
We heaved away from day to day  
With bar, and block, and tackle,

And from our ears the blood gushed out,  
And cheeks grew ashen-hollow,—  
And if we lagged or the taut ropes sagged  
The lash was sure to follow,—

And some of us fell with twitching loins  
And died of our endeavor—  
And the lash forbore; we could no more  
If they beat on forever.

So week by week they dragged us off,  
And bore us in a lighter  
Adown the Nile, poor carrion-pile;  
They soaked us well in nitre,

And tossed us in the mummy-pit,  
Bones cased in skin like leather . . .  
But, some great day, the prophets say,  
We'll all rise up together,

And meet our slayers face to face  
Before the God who made us—  
Then woe to him who crushed the limb,  
And woe to him who flayed us!

## SONG OF A FAIRY WIFE

I THRIVE on moonbeams dipt in dew;  
My drink is clover wine;  
My dress I sew of morning gauze  
With needles from the pine.

My husband is a robber bold,  
He waylays lab'ring bees  
And robs them of the golden store  
They carry down the breeze;

He lurks amid the moving grass,  
A wasp's sting is his sword;  
The scrambling beetle's burnished back  
He valiantly doth board,

And breaks him to the webbed rein . . .  
We have a garden, too,  
Where blossom flowerets so small  
That they escape man's view.

Above our little cottage roof  
There bends a blade of grass,  
And by our door ant caravans  
In long brown columns pass.

Nor do we envy gods, or men,  
Or purple pomp of kings;  
Enough the glory and the joy  
We find in little things.

## LILITH

THE fiercest Demon-Shape in hell  
Was Lilith fell,  
Was Lilith fell,  
Which rose a sudden dream to tell the dusk  
Lord Lucifer.

“I saw” (’twas said) “From heaven late  
In golden state  
Thro’ star-hinged gate  
The servants of the God I hate  
Down into Chaos stir.

I deem that He would make a world,  
Another world,  
(His millionth world)  
(Red lips in demon-laughter curled)  
Thus at our Fall He planned.  
“Then give me Form again” (’twas prayed)  
“Wherewith to invade  
Its garden-shade—’  
Then leaped the demon to a maid  
Beneath satanic wand!

So Lilith once more went the ways,  
The rose-red ways,  
The golden ways . . .  
She scorned like Eve to drop her days full ripe  
in Adam's hand.  
Her every laugh was Adam's snare,  
And, unaware,  
Her whims he bare . . .  
In a gold fowling net of hair  
She caught him, strand on strand.

Like to the ligure were her eyes,  
Her prescient eyes,  
Her subtle eyes,  
Which, young for ten eternities, on former  
worlds had wooed.  
Adam she taught forbidden lore  
And what of yore  
In love she bore  
On many a weird world before  
And Eden-solitude.

And so God made Eve to be born  
(First woman born,  
And strangely born—  
From a man's writhen body torn)

He said, "Now it shall be  
That Eve will Adam save from her  
Whose dropping myrrh  
Of speech doth stir  
His soul within him to defer  
In that which pleaseth me."

(Already had the war begun,  
Dread war begun,  
Dire war begun  
Between the Serpent and the Son, for other  
worlds afar  
Had felt the dreadful thing creep in  
And ancient sin  
Had set its gin  
To trap Edenic souls therein  
On many a passèd star.

And as the night pursues the day,  
The orient day,  
The risen day,  
The Hosts of Hell for aye and aye followed  
the feet of God . . .  
Where He world-specked the Infinite  
As locusts flit  
In swarms they lit  
And bit, and cankered where they bit,  
And shore of herb his sod.

And to each world the Christ came down,  
From heaven came down,  
From God came down,  
With miracles of great renown to disconcert  
the Wise—  
Ten thousand times was crucified,  
And groaned and died,  
With spear-pierced side,  
To ope the gates of heaven wide  
And thwart the Prince of Lies)

So, tho' that Eve were white and fair,  
Most lily fair,  
Most starry-fair,  
Adam yet dreamed of Lilith's hair, yea, being  
Sire of men,  
He yearned for her small kissèd face,  
And her embrace  
Of elder days  
Made all that leafy garden-place  
Seem now a noisome fen.

Still . . . God's great soul-faith doth not  
fail! . . .  
(Tho' old the tale  
It did not fail) . . .

His seraphs thro' the starry hail again Christ's  
galleon oar,  
And once more must the God-Man die,  
Must leave the sky,  
Be nailed on high,  
Must know afresh old agony—  
To save a world once more!

## THE SONG OF ISRAFEL

THE poet-seraph Israfel, chief player on  
the lyre—  
I dreamed he came to me last night with words  
like leaping fire,—  
Then Time became Eternity, then grew my  
vision whole:  
I took His hand; He led me forth to God, a  
naked soul!  
I saw a boundless universe where worlds of  
souls do find  
Freedom to bend and guide their growth as  
after God's own mind;  
The frightful night flashed full of suns as thick  
as sparks, when fall  
A city's roofs in, beam on beam, wall upon  
crashing wall—  
Around them little jeweled worlds like emer-  
ald insects drove  
Which spread and close in phalanx small within  
some shady grove.  
From heaven's awful parapets I viewed the  
mighty scene

While rose the Seraph's silver voice majestic  
and serene:  
"God's eye, alone, can count these suns (He  
knows nor space nor bound),  
And tributary worlds, alive with beings, gird  
them round;  
And thro' all space, from Deep to Deep, above  
the blinded throng,  
Great poets coin their labored thought into  
golden song,  
And sculptors chip the stubborn stone, and art-  
ists dream, and dare  
To give the Inner Vision birth with colors rich  
and rare;  
Musicians woo the Infinite half into finite clasp,  
As children reach for butterflies just poised be-  
yond the grasp. . . .  
Five peep-holes for the soul has earth . . .  
And other worlds have more,  
Or not as many . . . Mayhap two, or three  
. . . Or half a score. . . .  
Some stellar eyes more colors see where larger  
spectrums thrill;  
On some world's Music's silver sighs a wider  
gamut fill:  
And thus unnumbered worlds build souls, a  
million earths are trod

By other souls, which, in their way, have their  
dim dreams of God.

Nor reach ye aught beyond their grasp: your  
eyes, too, vague and dim,

Clutch at the rainbow of his face and hanker  
after Him.

Strange bodies souls inhabit, sure, round Algol's  
sullen suns

Where thro' tremendous-archèd skies the light-  
ning skips and runs,

And Alpha of the Centaur thralls what worlds  
bizarre and fair?

And who can limn the hidden life that circles  
round Altair?

And earths have perished on which God has  
builded up the soul,

While more worlds, thro' eternity, must seek  
the selfsame goal!"

No more I heard! The crystal globe of speech  
unuttered broke,

The vision faded from my dream, and in the  
night I woke;

Yet not in vain the Wonder came—God wot,  
my soul had heard

The Song that soars, the Song that leaps, be-  
yond the Written Word!

## SUSPICION

I SEE no good in anything, but aye the  
shadow of an ill,  
And behind every windy copse I fear an am-  
bush lurking still.  
Beneath each simple word well-meant I burrow  
for the deep design.  
My feet are wary of the springe. I fear the  
under-flaming mine.  
Nothing there is, as erst of old, that takes my  
being sweet and whole. . . .  
Nay, this is death instead of life. May God  
have mercy on my soul!

## IMPENITENCE

I REJOICE that I have sinned,  
I am glad that ONCE I cast  
All my scruples to the wind—  
Thus I gathered life at last.

I am glad that I have gone  
Where no honest thing is seen,  
Dared the night to feel the dawn  
Wash about me large and clean.

All the mystery of ill  
Gathered into force in me,  
Of all evil I took skill  
And it taught me purity.

Nay, there lingers no regret:  
I have looked thro' other eyes,  
Loosing folly without let  
That I might wax folly-wise.

Now with charity I scan  
Those who lurk where I have been,  
For HIS lips condemn no man,  
Who has suffered, who has seen.

## IN A CHOP-SUEY JOINT

CLIMB up a flight of darkly-winding stair,  
Push through a swinging door, and you  
are there.

The ceiling lowers low with strange design  
Where fire-mouthed dragons coil and inter-  
twine.

The joss-sticks' thin blue vapor creeps about  
Like prisoned spirit seeking some way out,  
And slipshod waiters shuffle silent by  
With rustling garments and quaint-slanted eye.  
If you but fold your sight you are away  
In some quaint yellow corner of Cathay,  
Lost in a garden of hand-monstered trees  
And exquisite uncouth barbarities  
Where threats a eunuch one-eyed like a star  
Towering malignant with a scimitar.

Now the sun-smitten highway, where there  
plies  
His trade the beggar with self-blinded eyes.

• • •

Now, drowning pastoral matin, woodland  
song,

From a great temple booms a brazen gong. . . .

The streets with chattering hordes are over-  
sped

Like swarming vermin in a beggar's head;  
And, here and there, amongst the long-cued  
horde,

A coolie-borne palanquin speaks a Lord. . . .

The spell is broken . . . Here's some tea to  
quaff . . .

Hark! from behind yon flower-damasked screen  
There breaks a coarse, loud-mouthed, salacious  
laugh

Pregnant with goatish lusts and deeds ob-  
scene . . .

It is some tawdry prostitute, I guess,  
Whose voice betrays her painted wantonness.

## LONELINESS

IN my breast a lonely heart  
    Echoes like a drum of doom,  
And one feeble, dim-lit lamp  
    Glimmers in this gloomy room;  
In the topmost of the sky  
    Shines a solitary star—  
O, how separate and lone  
    All of God's creations are.

## THE BIRD OF PARADISE

THOU art perfected splendor without the  
peacock's feet,  
And only the manna-dew of heaven thou dost  
eat,  
Bird of many colors, kinsman to the dawn,  
Richer in rare hues than the iris heaven-drawn!  
But sad it is to think that any ruthless clown  
With the cunning of a blow-pipe may bring thy  
beauty down.

## FISHERMEN

[*The Jersey Coast*]

THEY stand as still as shapes in bronze,  
great-bodied, pipe in mouth;  
A slant-stacked steamer trails the sky with  
smoke, against the South;  
Far out they watch the toiling tides that lift in  
crests of foam,  
Alert to glimpse the rippled stir where schools  
of bluefish roam;  
They seldom move, they seldom break the  
fancy of the eye  
That makes them seem a common part of earth  
and sea and sky. . . .  
A space beyond, the bathing folk along a sand-  
strip run,  
And pasty-visaged city groups slouch shaded  
from the sun,—  
And, of a sudden, as in dream, on either hand  
I see  
The crush and roar of modern life—and Christ  
in Galilee!

## A PRAYER

I KNEEL not now to pray that thou  
    Make white one single sin,—  
I only kneel to thank thee, Lord,  
    For what I have not been;

For deeds which sprouted in my heart  
    But ne'er to bloom were brought,  
For monstrous vices which I slew  
    In the shambles of my thought—

Dark seeds the world has never guessed  
    By hell and passion bred,  
Which never grew beyond the bud  
    That cankered in my head.

Some said I was a righteous man—  
    Poor fools! The gallow's tree  
(If thou hadst let one foot to slip)  
    Had grown a limb for me.

So for the Man I might have been  
My heart must cease to mourn—  
'Twere best to praise the living Lord  
For monsters never born,  
  
To bend the spiritual knee  
(Knowing myself within)  
And thank the kind, benignant God  
For what I have not been.

## THE STAR OF GOD'S MALISON

HANGING leprous and white in the wide  
universe  
Was a star done to death by the hand of God's  
curse.

Each mount was an island suspended in air,  
And petrified hurricanes hung here and there  
In impotent menace; whole forests inclined  
Were frozen one way by a visible wind;  
Like death-shrouded lava the face of the Deep  
Paused in green convolutions, in masses did  
stand  
Along the dread hush of a desolate land.

## HELL'S RESURRECTION

THE saffron-colored stars of Hell  
Diminished one by one;  
Their lustres into grayness fell—  
The New Age had begun;

And Satan's yellow gonfalons  
Like baleful meteors broke  
(Above his seething myrmidons)  
Thro' heaving bulks of smoke,

As at the Gates of Bliss they clung  
In this last hopeless war,  
Ere Hell sloped down the void, far-flung,  
Like some dismembered star;

At that same moment every rose  
Forsook its spikèd thorn;  
The North put warmth into its snows,  
Nor pushed with boreal horn;

The spider laddered patterns wove  
Across the cannon's mouth,  
And frankincense and myrrh and clove  
Breathed each wind full of South;

The serpent-sinuous wiles of Sin  
Assailed the sense no more,  
And wine, with bubbling demons in,  
To snare the soul forbore.

Mankind was first to cry complaint:  
Art lost all hues but white;  
Song found no subject but the saint  
And dropped its wings ere flight.

There grew no need for Book and Bell,  
And churches tumbled in;  
From her high honor Virtue fell,  
For GOD had vanquished Sin.

A sadness touched e'en Heaven, then,  
And shadows of despair;  
*No worship mounted up from men,—*  
*And angels live on prayer—*

"Ah, bring back Sin!" The Seraphim  
In mystic cadence cried.

"Ah, once more make our sunshine dim  
With Death!" Creation sighed.

So Death and Sin took up their way  
Among mankind once more,  
And Hell burst into dreadful day  
As it had flamed of yore!

## I SING THE BATTLE

I SING the song of the great clean guns that  
belch forth death at will.

Ah, but the wailing mothers, the lifeless forms  
and still!

I sing the song of the billowing flags, the bugles  
that cry before.

Ah, but the skeletons flapping rags, the lips  
that speak no more!

I sing the clash of bayonets and sabers that  
flash and cleave.

And wilt thou sing the maimed ones, too, that  
go with pinned-up sleeve?

I sing acclaimed generals that bring the victory  
home.

Ah, but the broken bodies that drip like honey-  
comb!

I sing of hosts triumphant, long ranks of  
marching men.  
And wilt thou sing the shadowy hosts that  
never march again?

## THE CONQUERORS

I SAW the Conquerors riding by  
With trampling feet of horse and men:  
Empire on empire like the tide  
Flooded the world and ebbed again;

A thousand banners caught the sun,  
And cities smoked along the plain,  
And laden down with silk and gold  
And heaped-up pillage groaned the wain.

I saw the Conquerors riding by,  
Splashing through loathsome floods of war—  
The Crescent leaning o'er its hosts,  
And the barbaric scimitar,—

And continents of moving spears,  
And storms of arrows in the sky,  
And all the instruments sought out  
By cunning men that men may die!

I saw the Conquerors riding by  
With cruel lips and faces wan:  
Musing on kingdoms sacked and burned  
There rode the Mongol Ghengis Khan;

And Alexander, like a god,  
Who sought to weld the world in one;  
And Cæsar with his laurel wreath;  
And like a thing from Hell the Hun;

And, leading like a star the van,  
Heedless of upstretched arm and groan,  
Inscrutable Napoleon went  
Dreaming of empire, and alone . . .

Then all they perished from the earth  
As fleeting shadows from a glass,  
And, conquering down the centuries,  
Came Christ, the Swordless, on an ass!

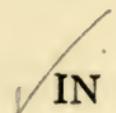


## GEOLOGY

WHAT matter if my life be passed  
In laughter or in tears and groans?  
Some day, compressed within a rock,  
They'll find the lime that made my bones.

## VIEWPOINT

WHEN Dante in old Florence walked the  
street  
(The same whom Beatrice in heaven did greet)  
Full many a member of the pygmy clan  
Whispered with laughter, "Yon's a crazy  
man!"



## IN DEBT

EACH man a general debt to mankind owes  
For all he is, all he enjoys, and knows,—  
And he who dares the least of men to ban  
Is just so many stages less a man.

## LOVELY CHILD

LOVELY child, make haste to play  
While the dew is on your day—  
Half a score of years ahead  
You will labor for your bread.

## PAUL AND OMAR

[*They were both tent-makers by trade*]

TWO tent-makers in different ages born—  
One played a lute, one blew an iron  
horn.  
One cried that flesh was weak and life was  
wrong,  
The other, “Only wine and love are strong.”

Omar, I share not all thy brimming bowl,  
Nor, Paul, would I, like thee, be naught but  
soul . . .

Player of careless lute, blower of horn,  
I pluck the rose, nor shrink I from the thorn.

## MT. RANIER

**S**NOW-GARMANTED, immense,  
And holding audience  
With subject clouds, he seems to poise in  
air,—  
And at his mighty base  
An hundred towns find place  
And two great cities rival-thewed and fair.

Above him, without bound,  
The heavens arch profound,  
As loverlike he greets the risen sun.  
His diamond-scattered snows  
Reflect the golden glows  
And purple glooms of eve as day is done.

There mile on mile he shines  
Above his ragged pines,  
An empire tributary to his view:  
Ten thousand wealthy farms,  
The blue Sound's gleaming arms,  
The distant ocean's wavering edge of blue.

There all the star-hushed night,  
Like a great ghost in white,  
    He communes with the Spirit of the Dark,  
While murmuring below  
Life's tides of being flow  
    And cities gleam like shards which flash a  
        spark.

How many thousand years  
Of human hopes and fears  
    He's known the sun and stars, no voice may  
        tell—  
But long ere humankind  
Groped slowly into mind  
    He hushed primeval forests with his spell.

How many thousand years  
Of human hopes and fears  
    He yet shall tower! till his slaughtered trees  
Have risen far and wide  
As homes where folk may bide  
    In many smoky cities at his knees.

And then when man is dust  
Still with His shoulders thrust

The black cloud-tumult of the storm in  
twain!  
When Life shall cease to be  
He still will greet the sea  
Far-flashing monarch of a dead domain.

## THE VOICE OF CHRISTMAS

I CANNOT put the Presence by, of Him, the Crucified,  
Who moves men's spirits with His Love as doth the moon the tide;  
Again I see the Life He lived, the godlike Death He died.

Again I see upon the cross that great Soul-battle fought,  
Into the texture of the world the tale of which is wrought  
Until it hath become the woof of human deed and thought,—

And, joining with the cadenced bells that all the morning fill,  
His cry of agony doth yet my inmost being thrill,  
Like some fresh grief from yesterday that tears the heart-strings still.

---

I cannot put His Presence by, I meet Him  
everywhere;  
I meet Him in the country town, the busy mar-  
ket-square;  
The Mansion and the Tenement attest His  
Presence there.

Upon the funneled ships at sea He sets His  
shining feet;  
The Distant Ends of Empire not in vain His  
Name repeat,—  
And, like the presence of a rose, He makes the  
whole world sweet.

He comes to break the barriers down raised  
up by barren creeds;  
About the globe from zone to zone like sun-  
light He proceeds;  
He comes to give the World's starved heart  
the perfect love it needs,

The Christ Whose friends have played Him  
false, Whom Dogmas have belied,  
Still speaking to the hearts of men—Tho'  
shamed and crucified,  
The Master of the Centuries Who will not be  
denied!

## THE MOTH'S SONG

'T IS good to be the moth that seeks the  
flame,  
To rush in on it, sudden, from the night—  
What tho' I, blackened, perish at the same—  
Do I not find the glory of the Light!

## THIS PALTRY "I"

**A**T times I sicken of this paltry "I,"  
At times it seems oblivion would be  
good. . . .

'Tis hard to know the truth and live the lie,  
Caught in the maelstrom of the multitude,  
And, in the common cloth of fools endued,  
To think like God and like an insect die.  
To give up what I have not were not vain.  
Call you this Life I drag from day to day?  
My dreams have wings of fire, but crawl in  
clay.  
I see the heights, yet cannot leave the  
plain. . . .  
O, He is cruel who makes known the way  
And gives not strength the summit to attain!

## PREDESTINATION

THERE is no peace for the blowing leaf,  
The end of his journey he never knows:  
He lifts from the ground with an upward heave  
Or settles, as lulls the wind or blows.

And he ever pretends to his traveling friends  
Mottled with crimson, dappled with fire,  
That he knows the country to which he wends,  
That he shapes his ways to his own desire.

## SIGHT BEYOND SIGHT

IF the good Lord had but restored  
    My sight, that were unkind  
To wend abroad and stare and nod  
    And yet within be blind!

But with that hand and that command  
    That filled the eye with light  
He gave to me the gift to see  
    Beyond the reach of sight.

## I DEEMED I DWELT ALONE

**I** DEEMED I dwelt alone.

I felt my life beat single in my breast.  
And then I looked about:  
The myriad lives that murmur in the grass,  
The million dwellers 'neath  
Each moss-enchased and lichen-spotted stone  
Called, "Friend, take thought of us—  
We too aspire and dream our insect dreams!"

## THE THRESHING MACHINE

THE green, fresh jackets of earèd corn  
looked cool amid the vibrant heat  
As we trod the stacks, and flung, day-long, the  
yellow bundles of corded wheat  
Into the maw of the threshing machine, while  
the curved knives glinted in the sun

As they swept with a periodic whirr and clove  
the bundles, one by one.  
The ever-recurring coil of the belt in a black  
ellipse sped round and round,  
And the chuff and snort of the engine's breath  
the lowing of pastured cattle drowned. . . .

Stack after stack our sturdy arms fed into the  
jaws of the toothed machine  
While the blowing-funnel heaped behind the  
threshed straw separate and clean,  
And the farmers backed their wagons up and  
held brown bags to a magic spout

From which, in intermittent streams, the yellow  
grain came rushing out.

When amber twilight softly laid its shadows  
on the rustling corn,

We stacked our forks, untrussed the belts, and  
gladly answered the supper-horn—

And, said the foreman, as we sat at board,  
with hunger whetted keen,

“Let poets sing of flails and such—But *I* thank  
God for the threshing machine!”

## THE CABLES AND THE WIRELESS

THE cable-operators swore because they  
had lost a word,  
And the wireless-workers wondered why a  
break in the code occurred. . . .

The plaint of the Deep-sea Cables as they lie  
in their sunless bed  
While liners flit like wind-blown clouds through  
the watery vast o'erhead;  
Couched soft in ever-dripping ooze, and cov-  
ered with living shells  
Alive with innumerable things and inquisitive  
tentacles,  
O'er ridges of tide-washed mountains, thro'  
fish-haunted valleys they go;  
Above them the ponderous waters swing and  
the crashing tempests blow,  
And many a night the Milky Way bends its  
magnificent bow  
Along the vault of the star-vast sky, its glory  
reflected below;

Its smoke's blue hint on the heaven's edge the  
lone tramp steamer trails,  
And day by day great ships sweep by with flash  
and glimmer of sails,  
While deep in watery empires dim where  
silence brims to the shores  
The lightning-footed messages leap along the  
ocean-floors . . .  
The plaint of the Deep-sea Cables beholding  
their empire done,  
Of every office stripped to clothe the Newly-  
Anointed One:  
"For many a year, alone, obscure, we've toiled  
unceasing for Man  
And added as suburbs to London the cities of  
teeming Japan;  
We've dragged our lengths laboriously from  
Deep to profounder Deep,  
And harnessed our souls to the will of Him—  
and, lo, the reward we reap!  
For He has discovered a feminine thing that  
runs with the great winds free  
Over the leagues of the steadfast land and the  
shifting acres of sea;  
She steals the warm live words from our  
mouths, and now they will let us lie

Abandoned amid the ooze and shells, to drop  
to pieces and die,  
Here with the rotten hulks of ships and the  
bones of mariners,  
No more to throb with the rapid tide of human  
passions and fears."

Now the sensitive heart of the Wireless by the  
grief of her forbears was stirred,  
And, bending above them, she sent them the  
balm of a soothing word:  
"Be silent, ye Deep-sea Cables! Your echoing  
voices arouse  
The sleep and the sloth of the ocean and the  
things which inhabit his house;  
Chide not, for I too am the vassal, like you,  
of the effort of Man  
To push further back the horizon toward the  
verge of the Infinite Plan.  
And perhaps in the widening ages and the mani-  
fold days which ensue  
I too must step down from my conquest, and  
render my wand to a new  
And swifter-footed Invention, which, leaping  
the chasm to Mars,  
Will link all the planets together in a common  
code of the stars,

And a large and unthought-of communion will  
tie on its sandals and run  
Its errands from planet to planet—from the  
flaming hills of the sun  
To the swing of the outermost orbit 'twill flash  
on its messages, free,  
As I thro' the wide air-ocean, as you thro' the  
deeps of the sea."

Then the Wireless resumed her travail, and  
peace reigned again as of yore,  
And the Cables gave over their clamor and  
bickered and fretted no more. . . .

But the Cable Operators swore because they  
had lost a word,  
And the Wireless-Workers wondered why a  
break in the code occurred.

## THE CRY OF YOUTH

I HEARD Youth crying in the night:  
    “Gone is my former world-delight;  
For there is naught my feet may stay;  
The morn suffuses into day,  
It dare not stand a moment still  
But must the world with light fulfil.  
More evanescent than the rose,  
My sudden rainbow comes and goes  
Plunging bright ends across the sky—  
Yea, I am Youth because I die!”







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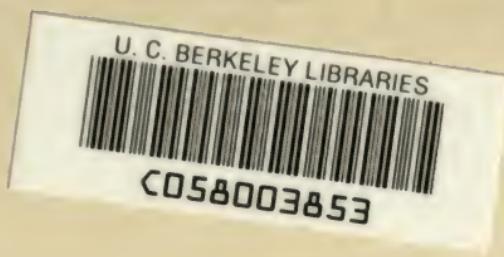
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